

Exploration Rovers Spirit and Opportunity—captured the imagination of the American public and the world when they landed on Mars to begin a 3 month-long NASA mission. The mission objective was to search for signs that water may have been present for long periods of time—signs that could tell us whether the Red Planet had been hospitable to life in the past. Within the first several months of the Mars mission, the NASA Web site experienced over a billion site visits. The Mars Exploration Rovers have been a wildly successful mission, with more than 13 miles of harsh Martian terrain traversed and over a quarter million awe-inspiring images from the Martian surface captured, in addition to many thousands of scientific spectra that lends to our study of Mars.

Spirit and Opportunity have made many important discoveries over the last 5 years. One of the most significant discoveries was evidence of water and geological information that supports an understanding that ancient Martian environments included periods of wet, possibly habitable conditions.

I wholeheartedly support H. Res. 67, the resolution offered by my friends and colleagues from southern California, Mr. SCHIFF and Mr. DREIER to honor NASA, their team from the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, and Cornell University on 5 years of great engineering and scientific discovery.

TRIBUTE TO Y-YARD AUTO AND TRUCK, INC.

HON. JOHN SHIMKUS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 17, 2009

Mr. SHIMKUS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Y-Yard Auto and Truck, Inc. of Effingham, Illinois.

Y-Yard Auto and Truck, Inc. was awarded the Automotive Recyclers Association CAR Star award in recognition of their commitment to environmental stewardship in the automotive recycling industry.

I would like to congratulate Y-Yard Auto and Truck, Inc. for this achievement, earned by upholding the highest in standards of environmental consciousness, safety, and customer service setting a leading example in their industry and community.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. SUE WILKINS MYRICK

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 17, 2009

Mrs. MYRICK. Madam Speaker, I was unable to participate in the following votes. If I had been present, I would have voted as follows:

Rollcall vote 125, on motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 987, the John Scott Challis, Jr. Post Office Designation Act, I would have voted "aye."

Rollcall vote 126, on motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 1217, the Specialist Peter J. Navarro Post Office Building Designation Act, I would have voted "aye."

Rollcall vote 127, on motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 1284, the Major Ed W.

Freeman Post Office Designation Act, I would have voted "aye."

TRIBUTE TO MAJOR GENERAL ROBERT E. DUIGNAN

HON. KEN CALVERT

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 17, 2009

Mr. CALVERT. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor and pay tribute to an individual whose dedication and contributions to the community of Riverside, California and to the United States of America are exceptional. This country has been fortunate to have dedicated, honorable, and steadfast leaders who willingly and unselfishly give their time and talent to make our communities better places to live and work. General Robert E. Duignan of the United States Air Force is one of these individuals and today I thank him for 36 years of service to our great nation. On Sunday, January 25, 2009, General Duignan was honored with a retirement celebration at March Air Reserve Base in Riverside, California.

General Duignan took his first plane ride at the age of 13, traveling from Seattle to New York, and from that moment he knew that he wanted to fly airplanes. He attended the University of Washington on an ROTC scholarship and earned a bachelor's degree in business. He entered the Air Force during the Vietnam War, a time when it was not popular to be in the military, and he experienced firsthand the objection to the war on his college campus. However, he never changed course and after graduation he spent 14 years at Travis Air Force Base, flying C-141 cargo planes on missions across the world, sometimes to pick up a single wounded soldier.

In 1989, General Duignan was promoted to Deputy Commander of Operations for the 459th Military Airlift Wing. While serving in this post, General Duignan witnessed the September 11, 2001, attack on the Pentagon and focused his efforts on the Global War on Terror as the Director of Plans and Programs at Headquarters AFRC. After two years, he returned to March Air Reserve Base and has worked tirelessly in support of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. As the Commander of the 4th Air Force he has supervised the Reserve's long-range airlift and air refueling units located throughout the continental United States, Hawaii and Guam. It is also important to note that during his career, he has accumulated more than 5,000 flying hours as a pilot flying the C-141, C-5, T-38 and T-37 aircrafts.

As we look at the incredibly rich military history of our country we realize that this history is comprised of men, just like General Robert Duignan, who bravely fought for the ideals of freedom and democracy. Each story is unique and humbling for those of us who, far from the dangers they have faced, live our lives in relative comfort and ease. Today I offer my gratitude for the decades of service and I salute Major General Robert Duignan as he retires from the United States Air Force.

FAIR TAX

HON. HENRY E. BROWN, JR.

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 17, 2009

Mr. BROWN of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, I rise today to highlight a unique and innovative economic stimulus proposal that doesn't rely on large amounts of government spending, borrowing from foreign governments, or rebate checks. Instead, the Fair Tax would be a permanent economic stimulus that would have none of the transparency issues of conventional spending, or of the current tax code under the IRS. As a co-sponsor of H.R. 25, the Fair Tax Act, I believe that simplification of the 45,000 page tax code will empower the American people through returning their earned spending power to them, and by reducing government spending.

The Fair Tax replaces all federal income and payroll based taxes with a progressive national retail sales tax, a prebate to ensure no American pays federal taxes on spending up to the poverty level, dollar-for-dollar federal revenue neutrality, and, through companion legislation, the repeal of the 16th Amendment. It abolishes all federal personal and corporate income taxes, gift, estate, capital gains, alternative minimum, Social Security, Medicare, and self-employment taxes and replaces them with one simple, visible, federal retail sales tax administered primarily by existing state sales tax authorities.

As April 15th approaches, imagine this: no tax forms to wade through, no worries about deductions, withholding, or underpayment, and no payroll tax. Instead you, just like every American, would have more take-home income that could be put towards things like mortgage bills, thereby addressing one of the root causes of this economic crisis.

I hope that in the future we will consider such innovative proposals as the Fair Tax, and I thank my colleagues Rep. JOHN LINDER from Georgia who has done so much to publicize the idea of the Fair Tax, and Rep. STEVE KING of Iowa who called this Special Order.

Madam Speaker, we can do something better than haphazard spending to get us out of this economic mess. We can simplify a tax code that destroys wealth, and replace it with one that lets Americans keep their entire paycheck. It's time for new solutions, and not more of the old tax and spend.

HONORING THE KNIGHTS OF PETER CLAVER, INC. AND THE CENTENNIAL OF THEIR FOUNDING

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 17, 2009

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the 100th anniversary of the Knights of Peter Claver, Inc. and to celebrate this group's century of dedication to God, Church, and Community through Charity.

In November of 1909, a group of forty African American men became the first initiates of a Catholic fraternal order called the Knights of